

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
BECK HALL, 3435 MAIN ST.
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214-3004
PHONE: 716-829-3777 FAX: 716-829-3776
E-MAIL: tkniazuk@buffalo.edu
www.erie.gov/enrp

Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting
May 21, 2004

Members:

James Allen
Meredith Andreucci
Hon. Vince Anello
G. Michael Brown
Drew Cerza
Jody Clark
Hon. Elise Cusack
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti
Tim Doolittle
Brian Eldridge
Hon. Wright Ellis
Matthew Enstice
Samuel Ferraro
Richard Geiger
Celeste Lawson
Maria Lehman
Hon. Peter McMahon
Hon. Gerald Meal
Hal Morse
Hon. Sean O'Connor
Dr. Gary Praetzel
David Rosenwasser
Laurence Rubin
Diane Ruzala
Laura St. Pierre
Hon. Mark Schroeder
Hon. Demone Smith
Hector Titus
Hon. Dennis Virtuoso
Timothy Wanamaker
Charles Webb
Peter Wendel

Present: Burmaster, Weinstein, Allen, Andreucci, Brown, Clark, Ellis, Enstice, Ferraro, Lawson, Lehman, McMahon, Meal, Morse, Praetzel, Rosenwasser, Ruzala, St. Pierre, Smith, Titus, Virtuoso, Webb (proxy), Wendel, Ross, Sheffer

Excused: Anello, Cerza, Cusack, Eldridge, Schroeder, Casale, Holt, Witul

Absent: DeBenedetti, Doolittle, Geiger, O'Connor, Rubin, Wanamaker

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. The Co-Chairs welcomed new member Niagara Falls Mayor Vince Anello.

Minutes of the March, 2004 meeting were approved.

Subcommittee Chair Hector Titus presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with **approval granted to pursue the short and long-term objectives recommended for the Small Business Assistance project; notably, to set up a steering group to assist in the development of an interactive website and ensuing programmatic ideas.**

ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro added some details for the process. The working group will make recommendations to the Economic Development Subcommittee on issues including the url name and housing agency, and the subcommittee would present those to the general membership for approval. Jo Nasoff (proxy for ENRP Member Charles Webb) noted that the ECIDA has a business calculator that we can use for our project. ENRP Member Meredith Andreucci added that the state did a similar project with 10 times as

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale
Hon. George Holt, Jr.
Hon. William Ross
John Sheffer, II
Lawrence Witul

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

many programs and agencies, and that it cost them \$45,000 to develop their website. She also noted that someone will have to take responsibility for keeping the data fresh. Titus, Ferraro, and ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre volunteered to serve on the steering group.

Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with **approval granted for ENRP to request Erie County to take whatever steps are necessary to bring electronic permitting live, and for ENRP to request that Niagara County offer an appropriate financial contribution to bring e-permitting live in that county; also for the Government Affairs Subcommittee to offer its services to help facilitate the aforesaid.** Ferraro noted that an inventory of Niagara County municipalities should be done to determine whether they have the hardware, software, and training to handle this. ENRP Ad Hoc Member John Sheffer responded that these issues are expressly addressed in the Institute's contract with Erie County. He added that this contract is now expired, but that the county wants to extend it for six months or a year.

Approval was also granted to organize an educational forum in conjunction with the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise on the Regional Economic Development Database for local officials, with a follow-up letter soliciting sites from the municipalities to be considered for inclusion on the REDD and Site Finder. Finally, approval was granted to invite Erie County Deputy County Executive Carl Calabrese to speak at the July 30 general meeting on the topic of homeland security. (The request for concept approval to develop a brownfields conference was tabled in deference to a conference already being organized by the Buffalo Niagara Partnership to be held June 23.)

Subcommittee Chair David Rosenwasser presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with **concept approval granted to develop a forum with a cross section of hotel properties to find out what they need to better implement front line training for tourism. As a first step, the subcommittee requested that the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation be prepared to discuss their current training efforts and strategic plans at the Monday, June 14, 2004 subcommittee meeting.** On the topic of cultural tourism directional signage, it was noted that ENRP Member Meredith Andreucci has done major signage analysis. On the topic of tourist

transportation, it was noted that the Seneca Niagara Casino is negotiating with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Agency for shuttle service.

Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse presented the Transportation Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with a ballot passed out for ENRP members to list their priorities for subcommittee projects in 2004.

ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro gave an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, www.regionalframework.com. The project is on track for a draft in early summer and a completed document in late summer 2004.

Ferraro also gave an update on power relicensing, <http://niagara.nypa.gov>. June 24 is the next stakeholders meeting. The New York Power Authority wants a settlement document by January 1, 2005. This deadline will lead to a spike in the discussions.

ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre gave an update on the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Buffalo Niagara NOW effort. The effort was started three years ago, and is similar to what ENRP is doing, but in the private sector. There are 11 initiatives – including regional land use planning and the local development delivery system – that are updated quarterly. Two new initiatives are shovel ready land and workforce development coordination to existing and new employees. The next meeting is July 7.

ENRP Ad Hoc Member John Sheffer and ENRP Member James Allen gave a presentation on the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS). Sheffer noted that the REDS is partially an outgrowth of ENRP's Economic Development Working Group, and follows a SWOT analysis. The EDWG reached the conclusion that economic development questions must be considered in the context of a regional strategy. The REDS is a collaborative effort between UB, the ECIDA, and the Amherst IDA; with a technical advisory committee made up of stakeholders in the two counties. He added that the REDS has gone through several iterations in process and substance in the last year – some a bit traumatic – but that now it is in a constructive stage, with the Institute, BNE, and ECIDA reaching consensus on the report.

Sheffer continued that the draft report sets a new economy context for economic development in the region, and points to

industry clusters as a fundamental piece. The ECIDA has agreed to pursue a study on this piece that will be integrated into the REDS. He added that the one IDA idea is not the most important issue for the region; it's having a common strategy that everyone is employing to foster economic development.

Allen detailed some of the key pieces of the REDS, including the importance of keeping everything in the context of the new economy. The six factors of the new economy are: globalization; technological advance; knowledge-based economy; the new nature of work; innovation and entrepreneurship; and the network as an organizational paradigm.

Allen continued that change is inevitable and rapid. We need to focus on new business development and growing our own existing businesses. To do that we need an effective leadership infrastructure, policy and laws, human resources and workforce preparedness, physical conditions such as shovel ready sites and comprehensive planning, business formation and support, technology and infrastructure, and quality of life.

The four goals of the REDS are: innovation and entrepreneurship; quality of place and economic development; enhance entrepreneurial governance and regional stewardship; and cluster development. Allen noted that the technical advisory committee initially identified five clusters, but the ECIDA analysis will determine how many there truly are. They will also look at secondary clusters. Following this analysis, the last phases are to tie in the cluster piece and develop implementation steps. The Institute will help facilitate these steps. Sheffer added that this is a substantial job and that the Institute will need technical and financial support to accomplish it.

Co-Chair Weinstein requested a concrete example of a cluster. Allen pointed to life sciences, which is bioinformatics but also its support firms. Information technology is software design, hardware, etc. Allen further explained that sectors are narrow bands within the clusters.

Weinstein asked for a revised timeframe. Sheffer replied that it depends on the finishing of the cluster piece, but that the Institute will hone the new economy piece in the meantime. Fall may be a realistic timeframe. Allen noted that we can work on pieces like place making right away, and Sheffer added that issues like equity, gender, and

workforce development can also be pursued on a parallel track to the cluster analysis.

ENRP Member Celeste Lawson informed the group that the June edition of Money magazine has moved Buffalo up on their most desirable list. She asked if anyone knew what the factors were in their ranking. St. Pierre replied that they are based on Richard Florida's quality of life work. Projecting out into the next 10 years, we're ranked number two for quality of place out of regions with a million plus people.

There was no old or new business.

The Co-Chairs thanked the group for their attendance and input, and the meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk
July 23, 2004